

# Lieutenant Governor Denn Proclaims February as African American History Month in Delaware

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Dover, Del. – Delaware Lt. Governor Matt Denn joined Secretary of State Jeffrey Bullock today during a public ceremony to declare February 2014 as African American History Month. The ceremony was held at the Delaware Public Archives and this year's announcement was special because 2014 marks the 60th anniversary of the monumental Brown v. Board of Education ruling that paved the way to integrate public schools in both Delaware and throughout the nation.

Lt. Governor Denn highlighted that “much of Delaware’s honor, strength and stature can be attributed to the diversity of cultures and traditions that are celebrated by the residents of this great state. We take this opportunity to celebrate African American History Month, in honor of the many contributions African Americans have made to the State of Delaware and our Nation.”

During the proclamation ceremony, the guest speakers explained to the audience the effect that the Brown v. Board decision had on their lives. Toriano Giddens, principal at William Henry Middle School, spoke about the effect the ruling has on today's generation of students and how it has positively impacted the students at his school. In the 1950s, the William Henry School was a segregated high school, one of the few in the state where African American students could attend.

The featured speaker for the day was Dr. Homer W. Minus who discussed his status as one of the pioneers of the desegregation movement in Delaware when he served as a plaintiff in the Parker v. University of Delaware case. As part of a group of Delaware State College students who went to court to gain entry into the University of Delaware, Dr. Minus was one of the first seven African American students who were admitted to the University in the fall of 1950.

Following the ceremony, Stephen Marz, State Archivist and Director of the Delaware Public Archives, invited the attendees to meet Orlando Camp, co-author of the book "The Milford Eleven" and to visit the new Brown v. Board of Education Shadow Box Exhibit at the Archives. The display presents the history of the events that took place in Delaware which eventually led to the desegregation of the public school system in the First State. A special feature of the exhibit is a section focusing on the controversy surrounding the Milford crisis of 1954.